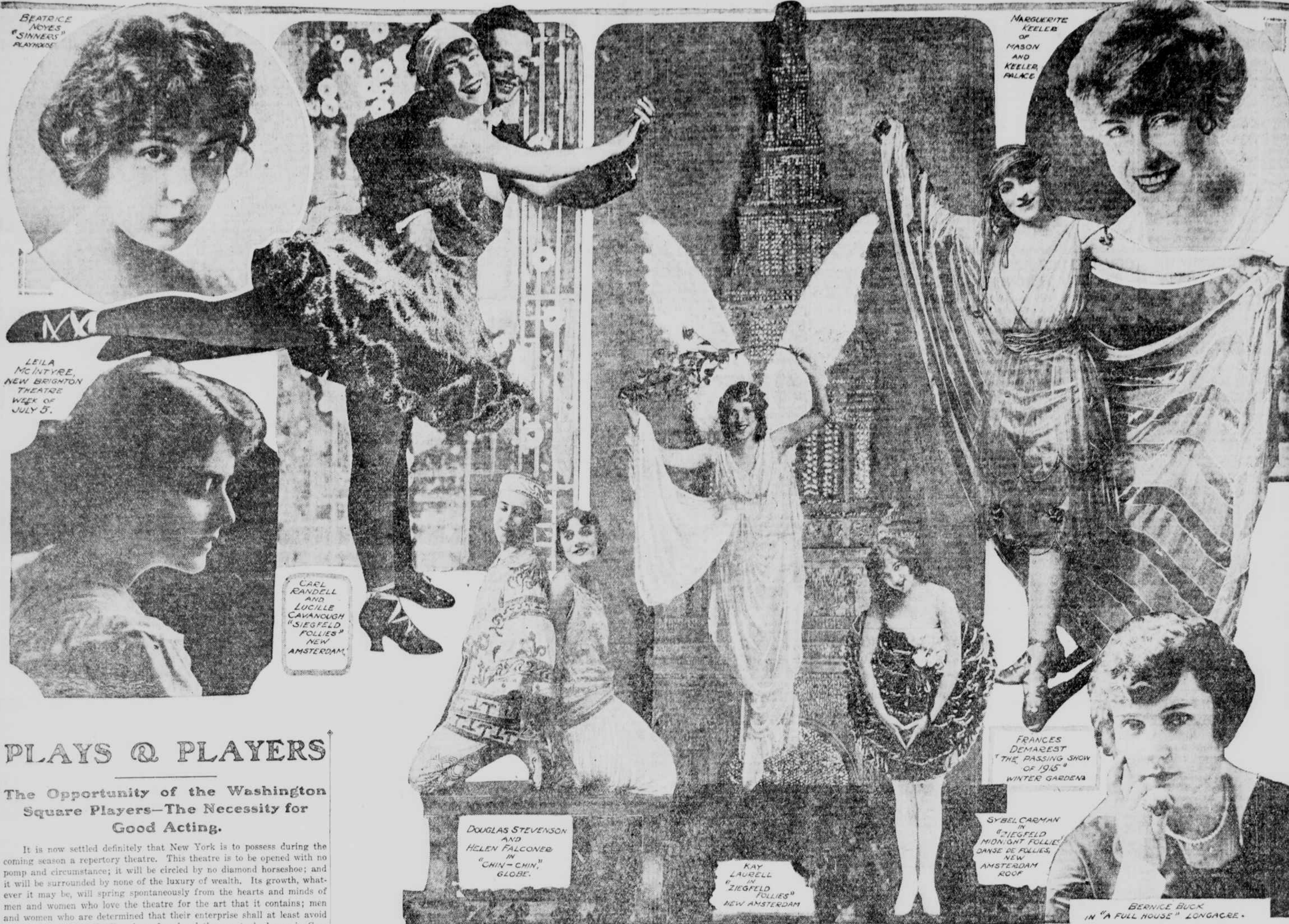


# AFFAIRS OF THE WEEK IN THE PLAYHOUSES



## PLAYS & PLAYERS

### The Opportunity of the Washington Square Players—The Necessity for Good Acting.

It is now settled definitely that New York is to possess during the coming season a repertory theatre. This theatre is to be opened with no pomp and circumstance; it will be circled by no diamond horseshoe; and it will be surrounded by none of the luxury of wealth. Its growth, whatever it may be, will spring spontaneously from the hearts and minds of men and women who love the theatre for the art that it contains; men and women who are determined that their enterprise shall at least avoid shipwreck upon the Scylla where foundered the great playhouse in Central Park West. Whatever barriers it may have to pass, the impression that the new project is only a social toy will not be one. It begins in modesty, with no enemies and no promises. If its troubles are before it they at least are not behind it as well. It enters upon the dramatic battlefield with a clean shield, and if it has yet to win its spurs it has no past crimes to atone for.

The announcement of the Washington Square Players that they are to open a season at the Bandbox Theatre is, indeed, the most encouraging sign that has appeared on our theatrical horizon since the founding of the New Theatre. At last New York is to have a theatre where the new dramatist will receive a welcome, where ideas will not be scorned, where even experiments will be permitted. This much is evident from the few performances the Players gave during the last season. These performances, whatever their defects, were of plays either by unknown writers or by European masters, and in them there was always a sincerity and an idealism of spirit such as was rarely found in the more pretentious theatres of Broadway. In addition their staging, at least in the matter of scenery and costumes, was unusually good, at times unusually imaginative; better, indeed, than nine-tenths of the works seen upon the New York boards. The spirit animating both players and audiences was, too, vastly different from that which the usual actor and spectator arouse in one another. In short, the Washington Square Players have already shown that they both possess and value brains, and in this knowledge they can face the future unafraid.

This, needless to say, is the bright side of the picture. That there is another side goes without saying—there always is in this imperfect world. A repertory theatre which is really to succeed must possess not only plays, it must also possess players. The young artists from Washington Square proved last season that they have talent in their midst; but it is talent that is as yet largely untrained and unformed. Now, talent in itself will not carry a theatre to success—there must be schooling and zealous insistence upon the best and only the best. The work of the amateur is all very well when his appearances were as few as they were last season; when the prices were low, and the novelty fresh; but for a regular season of repertory, with a bid for a far more general support, the amateur must be dispensed with, unless he can make his offering the equal, if not the superior, of that of the professional.

It is to be hoped, then, that the Washington Square Players will welcome to their ranks all who show ability, and to allow ability alone to determine the composition of their company. Of course, there are actors of ability whose temperament unfits them for work in a repertory company, but such actors are far rarer than is generally supposed. If the Washington Square Players offer to the public a series of plays worthy of production they will find no lack of actors capable of undertaking them. If such a company is provided the public will support it, for, despite the pessimists, good acting always is appreciated. If, on the other hand, the acting is amateurish, all the ideals and well meaningness in the world won't drag the public to it. The public which must support the Bandbox will be a discriminating public. It will go because the plays are more interesting than those to be had elsewhere, and because the acting is worthy of the plays. The solution of the American theatre lies in just such organizations as that of the Washington Square Players, and to these organizations the histrionic side is of prime importance. In them the acting must be neither that of the stereotyped Broadway player nor of the slipshod and unauthoritative amateur. Sincerity will be useless without technique. It is to the acting and stage management that the directors of this new organization must give most zealous attention. Clear and musical diction, grace of movement, authority of bearing, will all be necessary if success is to crown their efforts. These virtues were not always present in last season's performances. They could be forgiven then. Next season they will not so easily be forgiven. After all, frankness is best, and it had better come before than after the event.

## PROMISES OF THE COMING SEASON

### Managers Will Offer Many Productions in New York Early This Fall.

### SEASHORE CITIES HAVE SEEN A FEW

### "The House of Glass" and "Back Home" Both Well Received at New Jersey Resort.

From the signs already displayed at the seashore resorts, and the promises of performances soon to come, there will in all probability be an abundance of dramatic material waiting for the New York theatres to open their 1915-16 season. And from these signs, too, it is not hard to deduce that at least several of the first performances in the metropolis will occur earlier than usual this fall. Already there have been tried out at Atlantic City three plays, and announcements have been made for theatres at Long Branch and Asbury Park—which with the former coast city constitute a few of the testing places for productions destined to reach New York in the autumn—of other dramas which will be seen there in July and the first part of August.

There have already been staged at Atlantic City Max Martin's "The House of Glass," Irvin S. Cobb and Bayard Veiller's "Back Home," and George Scarborough's "The Girl." Of the first named, "The Dramatic Mirror" correspondent writes, "it looks like a winner." And New Haven has seen "The Blue Paradise." This was termed after its three day run the best musical production seen in the Connecticut city all season. It will be brought to New York in the fall.

Cohan & Harris are responsible for "The House of Glass," which is called

a powerful drama of New York life. Several of the elements which went to make "Within the Law" a success enter into this play. There is the young girl who has served a jail sentence, the young crook, and, naturally, the detective. But the career of the girl, which forms the main thread of the play, is shaped differently from the Eltinge Theatre success. This is said to afford an excellent opportunity for Mary Ryan, and the cast which surrounds her is also termed excellent. In it are Frederick Burr, Thomas Findlay, as the detective, Harry Brown, as McClellan, an attorney, Ada Gilman, James C. Marlowe, Lila Rhodes and several others.

Thomas A. Wise and Willis P. Sweatnam have the leading roles in "Back Home," which is a dramatization of the famous "Judge Priest" stories. Wise has the part of the Judge, and Sweatnam plays Jeff. Phoebe Foster, last seen here in "Under Cover" is the Sallie Priest. In addition to the carefully drawn plot, this play has a real circus parade at the close of its second act, which met with approval at the hands of the Atlantic City audience, where it was shown for a week.

David Belasco and the Frohman estate are the sponsors for George Scarborough's play "The Girl." This tells of a young woman from Missouri who is regenerated by a clergyman, and a company of stars well known to Broadway interpret the story. William H. Thompson, recently at the Knickerbocker in "The Hypnotist" is at its head. John Milner, who spent most of last season at the Eltinge in "Innocent," Lowell Sherman, a prominent stock star, Leatrice Ulrich, who toured last year in "The Bird of Paradise," and William G. Smythe are numbered among the other members.

Madge Kennedy will have the principal part in "The Mystic Shrine" by Avery Hopwood, which the Selwyns are to present at Atlantic City this week.

Frederick Ballard, in whose "Believe Me, Xantippe" John Barrymore was featured, has written a new play which Cohan & Harris will produce—according to present plans—in Atlantic City

early this month. The company will include Peggy Wood, Ethel May Davis, Otto Kruger, William Sampson, Percy Helton, Doris Kelly and Josephine Williams.

July 26 Clinton Moffat and Daniel Ponnell, late of Henry Miller's staff, will offer at Atlantic City Augustin McHugh's latest effort, entitled "Search Me." This is a melodramatic fare, and will be played by Howard Estabrook, Vera Mellish, Montagu Love, and others.

At about the same time A. H. Woods will present for a preliminary season at Asbury Park "The Heart of a Child." This play, in four acts, is the work of Zella Sears, and is founded upon Frank Danby's novel of the same name. Miss Sears will be in the company, and Kathleen Clifford will have the leading role. George Sidney, the theatrical manager of "The Show Shop" will also be a member of the cast.

Mr. Woods has announced five other plays with which he will start the season. First in the list comes "Common Clay," after a twenty weeks' run in Boston; this will serve as the vehicle for Jane Cowl, who has not been on Broadway for a season, and John Mason. Julian Eltinge is scheduled to open at the theatre which bears his name in September in "Cousin Lucy." Charles Klein's last play, "See My Lawyer," will be the medium for the reintroduction of T. Roy Barnes to the legitimate from the variety; "The New Shylock" will have in its cast Dorothy Donnelly, Josephine Victor and Forrest Winant. "Potash and Perlmutter, Incorporated," is from the pens of Montague Glass and Roi Cooper Megrue, and is expected by the Woods offices to be as big a hit as the first drama of Abe and Mawruss. Most of the original company will have parts in this play.

Roi Cooper Megrue is also the author of "Under Fire," which will open the Hudson Theatre in the fall. In this offering will be seen William Courtenay, Frank Craven and numerous other players. This play is hoped to duplicate the success scored by Mr. Megrue's "Under Cover," in which Mr. Courtenay was the featured member of the cast.

The Selwyns are already engaging members of the company to present Edgar Selwyn's "Rolling Stones," and another attraction sure to gain wide-spread attention is "Land of Happiness" by J. Hartley Manners, in which Laurette Taylor will star at the close of her London run in "Peg o' My Heart."

Then there is "Robson's Choice," to be produced under the direction of B. Iden Payne. Included in the players who will appear in the work of Harold Brighouse are Margaret Nyblor, Whitford Kane and A. G. Andrews.

Taylor Holmes will be one of the season's new stars when he opens at the Comedy Theatre on August 16 in "Mr. Myd's Mystery," and it is the intention of the Shuberts and Joseph Brooks to keep the organization which will play with him intact through the season, changing the vehicles occasionally.

Other plays scheduled for early presentation are "The Last Laugh," an offering by the Shuberts, with Edward Abeles; David Belasco's "The Boomerang;" and Frank McIntyre in "Brother Masons."

Luna Park.

A number of attractions have been added to the usual excellent programme at Luna Park that visitors to the seashore resort may have something to look forward to in the holiday week. Probably the feature "stunt" performed there is the exhibition of the De Phillips, two daring high-wire artists. Upon a slender thread, stretched eighty feet in the air, one of the team rides upon a unicycle, and to its pedals is attached a single trapeze which travels along underneath. From this the other artist executes a series of breath-taking tricks. The great height at which the daring double feat is performed, together with its hazardous character, causes visitors all sorts of thrills. Then, too, the free circus is proving attractive, with its three shows a day and excellent orchestra.

Jardin de Danse.

Audrey Munson, "the Panama-Pacific Exposition girl," continues as the principal feature at the Jardin de Danse, atop the New York Theatre, this week. Miss Munson executes a series of beautiful pictures, and in the course of her act poses as the central figure of canvases that well-known artists have done. Ten other dance stars are to be seen each evening at the Jardin de Danse, and Mel Craig, the orchestra leader, and his sextette are still drawing much applause with their novelty. Then, too, there are Dixie Girard and Lucile Carter, whose singing numbers have been well received. The management has styled this roof garden the coolest one in New York, and has assembled an attractive bill in keeping with its policy of pleasing the public.

## VAUDEVILLE

### Attractive Holiday Bills Arranged for This Week's Patrons of the Keiths Theatres.

Palace Theatre.

Amelia Bingham heads the Palace bill this week in a new version of her original conception, "Big Moments from Big Plays." Supported by a company, including Lloyd Bingham, she will give dramatic snapshots of the climaxes of great tragedies and comedies which have touched the heart of humanity. Following the policy of presenting a great concert or operatic star every week, the Palace announces Orville Harrold, the greatest of American tenors, in a programme of delightful songs. Mr. Harrold is in his best voice, after a well earned rest. Emma Carus will appear in a new act, supported by Noel Stewart. Miss Carus is a Palace favorite. Walter C. Kelly, "The Virginia Judge," has been induced to cut his holiday short and return to the Palace for a week. His impersonation of the Southern magistrate is one of the few creations of modern comedy which bid fair to become classic. Homer B. Mason and Marguerite Keeler will present Porter Emerson Browne's sketch, "Married," one of the strongest comedy offerings of the season. The famous Bell family of nine brothers and sisters will do bell ringing and other musical specialties. Arnauld Brothers, the European clowns; Charles Olcott, offering "A Comic Opera in Ten Minutes," and Mazie King, assisted by Tyler Brooks, are also on the bill.

Bushwick Theatre.

Stars of both the legitimate and vaudeville stage are included in the programme planned for this week at the Bushwick Theatre. Topping the list will be Elizabeth Brice and Charles King, direct from their run in "Watch Your Step." This pair has a distinctive style of entertainment, and they have become desirable headliners by reason of their singing, the songs they offer and their dancing. They will present their act called "A Bit of Musical Comedy in a Vaudeville Way," and will render several of the songs that have made them popular in recent musical successes. The comedy feature of the bill will be Henry Lewis, who will introduce a blend of song, talk and dance in his monologue, "A Vaudeville Cocktail." Clifton Webb, assisted by Gloria Goodwin and the Russian Balalaika Orchestra, will offer a collection of original dances, among them "Moment Musical," "Tango Trot" and Mr. Webb's delineation of "Tipperary Trot" and "Gavotte." Kaufman Brothers, with their slangy coon shouting, will present a number of new songs and some novel patter, and Dorothy Richmond, Pell Trenton and company will be seen in Edgar Allan "Vodit's "A Midnight Marriage." The other acts will include Billy Tower and Mabel Darrell, Fred and Albert, Mae Bronte and Ernest Aldwell, Orville Stamm, "the boy Hercules," and a feature picture.

Prospect Theatre.

With Maggie Cline, "the Queen of the Emerald Isle," as the dominating figure, an "All Irish Bill" is to be presented at Keith's Prospect Theatre this week. Every performer who appears on the stage is a representative vaudevillean from "old Erin's shore." Maggie Cline was enjoyed years ago, when she was a favorite at Tony Pastor's, and vaudeville audiences all over the country still find much pleasure in her songs. Quite as popular, and with equal histrionic ability, Pat Rooney and Marion Bent will be on hand to-morrow to present their success, "At the News Stand." They have established themselves as one of the big features of the two-day, and in their vehicle Mr. Rooney's eccentric dance creations play an important part. Ernest R. Ball, known for his "Mother Machree" and "A Little Bit of Heaven Called Ireland," will also have a prominent place on this week's bill. Then, too, there will be Mr. and Mrs. Mark Murphy, in their latest comedy effort, "The Coal Strike." Other representative sons and daughters of Erin who will appear on the feature programme will be Jane Connelly and players, in "A Strong Cup of Tea," a short comedy; William J. Kelly, the well known stock favorite, who will tell stories; Jack Ryan and Harry Tierney, who have already been at the Prospect two weeks; Donevan and Lee, the Woods Brothers and a comedy film.